

News

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AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGES IN NEW YORK: THIRD QUARTER 2005 5.5-PERCENT WAGE GAINS IN DUTCHESS AND ORANGE LEAD COUNTIES OUTSIDE NEW YORK CITY, WESTCHESTER HAS HIGHEST AVERAGE WAGE

In the third quarter of 2005, Dutchess and Orange Counties each had wage gains of 5.5 percent over the year, the fastest growth among New York's 12 counties outside of New York City with employment of 75,000 or more, according to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics.¹ Westchester County had the highest average weekly wage at \$1,005, \$228 above the national average and ranked 20th among the 322 largest counties nationwide. (See table 1.) Regional Commissioner Michael L. Dolfman noted that among New York's 12 largest counties half reported wages above the national average of \$777, but none recorded wage growth above the national increase of 6.1 percent.

Rockland County had the strongest rate of employment growth over the year, up 1.6 percent in September 2005. Onondaga County had the second highest rate of job growth, 1.0 percent, followed closely by Orange and Monroe Counties, up 0.9 and 0.8 percent, respectively. Nationally, employment grew by 2.0 percent from September 2004 to September 2005. (See table 1.)

At the state level, the average weekly wage in New York increased 5.7 percent to \$941 in the third quarter of 2005. While New York's wage growth was fairly close to the 6.1-percent national increase, the State's average weekly wage of \$941 was roughly 21 percent higher than the U.S. average of \$777. The average weekly wage in New York ranked fourth highest in the nation, behind the District of Columbia (\$1,265), Connecticut (\$966), and Massachusetts (\$947) and ahead of New Jersey (\$928). (See table 2.)

Wage levels

Among the 12 large counties outside of New York City, 6 had wages above the national average in the third quarter of 2005, but only 1, Westchester, exceeded \$1,000. Westchester County's average

¹ The five counties in New York City are featured annually in a separate press release, last issued on November 29, 2005. Data for the five New York City counties, however, has been included in table 1 of this news release for the reader's convenience.



Round-the-clock recorded messages for the **Consumer Price Index** and a variety of other **Bureau of Labor Statistics** data are available by dialing the **New York Information Office's** main telephone number: (212) 337-2400. For recorded messages, press '2.' Press '1' for 24-hour Fax-on-Demand service.

weekly wage was 29.3 percent above the national level, ranking 20th among the 322 largest counties nationwide. Nassau County's wage, \$862, was well below Westchester's, but still placed in the top 20 percent of the national ranking at 61st. Suffolk County had the third highest wage level at \$836 and ranked 76th. Three other counties—Rockland, Albany, and Dutchess, all bordering the Hudson River—also had wages above the U.S. average, with levels ranging from \$806 to \$783. (See chart 1.) Counties with wages below those for the nation were spread throughout the State, but the two counties with wages 20 percent or more below the national average, Oneida and Broome, were located in central New York. Oneida's average weekly wage of \$613 was the lowest in the State among the large counties and ranked close to the bottom nationally at 298th; Broome County was not far behind (\$623, 291st).

Among the 322 largest counties in the nation, New York County, N.Y., recorded the highest average weekly wage at \$1,419 in the third quarter of 2005. Santa Clara, Calif., was second, with an average weekly wage of \$1,403, followed by Arlington, Va. (\$1,292), San Mateo, Calif. (\$1,268), and Washington, D.C. (\$1,265). Three of the 10 counties with the highest wages were located in the greater New York metropolitan area (New York, N.Y., Fairfield, Conn., and Somerset, N.J.), 3 others were located in and around the San Francisco area (Santa Clara, San Mateo, and San Francisco in California), while 3 more were located in or around the Washington D.C. metropolitan area (Washington, D.C., Arlington, Va., and Fairfax, Va.). The lowest average weekly wage was reported in Cameron County, Texas (\$486), followed by the counties of Hidalgo, Texas (\$499), Horry, S.C.(\$505), and Webb, Texas and Yakima, Wash. (\$525 each).

Over-the-year wage changes

Three large counties in the State, excluding those comprising New York City, had wage growth of 5.0 percent or better: Dutchess and Orange Counties, with gains of 5.5 percent each, and Suffolk County, with an increase of 5.0 percent. Rockland County followed closely with an over-the-year wage gain of 4.8 percent. Still, all four of these counties placed in the bottom half of the national ranking ranging from 174th to 223rd.

The smallest wage gains in the State were recorded in Monroe and Albany Counties and averaged 2.0 and 1.9 percent, respectively. Although increases in all of New York's large counties were below the national average of 6.1 percent, none of the counties experienced an over-the-year decline in wages. Of interest, Westchester County, which recorded a wage level nearly 30 percent above the U.S. average, exhibited one of the slower growth rates in the country, 4.1 percent, and ranked in the bottom quartile at 260th among the 322 large counties.

Passaic County, N.J., led the nation in wage growth with an increase of 19.0 percent. Average weekly wages in Fort Bend, Texas, grew 15.4 percent; in Boulder, Colo., wages increased 13.8 percent; and in San Mateo, Calif., and Harrison, Miss., gains of 12.7 percent were recorded. Wage growth in Harrison, Miss., and Orleans, La. (10.7 percent), were boosted as a result of the disproportionate job and pay losses in the lower-paid industries following Hurricane Katrina. Five large counties experienced over-the-year declines in average weekly wages. Clayton County, Ga., had the largest decrease, -5.1 percent, followed by the counties of Benton, Ark. (-1.2 percent), Trumbull, Ohio (-0.6 percent), Saginaw, Mich. (-0.4 percent), and St. Joseph, Ind. (-0.1 percent).

Employment

Among the 12 large counties in New York, employment ranged from a high of 609,800 in Suffolk to a low of 94,800 in Broome during September 2005. None of these counties surpassed the nation's 2.0 percent-rate of employment growth from September 2004 to September 2005, and only one county, Rockland, with an increase of 1.6 percent, added jobs at better than a 1-percent pace. In fact, not all of New York's large counties added jobs over the year; the exceptions were Dutchess (-0.1 percent) and Erie (-0.4 percent).

Nationally, Lee County, Fla., which includes Fort Meyers, had the largest over-the-year percentage increase in employment, 11.4 percent. Employment declined in 35 of the 322 largest counties from September 2004 to September 2005, with the steepest drop occurring in Orleans County, La. (-26.3 percent). Job losses in Orleans County, as well as the counties of Jefferson, La. (-25.6 percent), and Harrison, Miss. (-13.9 percent), reflected the destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina.

Average weekly data by county are compiled under the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program, also known as the ES-202 program. The data are derived from reports submitted by employers subject to state and federal unemployment insurance (UI) laws. The 8.6 million employer reports cover 132.9 million full- and part-time jobs. The average weekly values are calculated by dividing quarterly total wages by the average of the three monthly employment levels of those covered by UI programs. Then, this result is divided by 13, the number of weeks in the quarter. It is to be noted, therefore, that over-the-year wage changes for geographic areas may reflect shifts in the composition of employment by industry, occupation, and such other factors as hours of work. Thus, wages may vary among counties, metropolitan areas, or states for reasons other than changes in the average wage level. Data for all states, Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), counties, and the nation are available on the BLS Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/cew/>; however, data in QCEW press releases have been revised (see Technical Note below) and may not match the data contained on the Bureau's Web site.

Additional statistics and other information

An annual bulletin, *Employment and Wages*, features comprehensive information by detailed industry on establishments, employment, and wages for the nation and all states. *Employment and Wages Annual Averages, 2004* is now available for sale from the United States Government Printing Office, Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250, telephone 866-512-1800, outside of Washington, D.C. Within Washington, D.C., the telephone number is 202-512-1800. The fax number is 202-512-2104. The bulletin is now available in a portable document format (PDF) on the BLS Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn04.htm>. Also, the quarterly press release, County Employment and Wages, presents employment and wage data for the largest counties in the U.S. and is available at <http://www.bls.gov/cew/>.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200; TDD message referral phone number: 1-800-877-8339.

For personal assistance or further information on the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages program, as well as other Bureau programs, contact the New York-New Jersey Information Office at (212) 337-2400 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. ET.

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita

The measures of employment and wages reported in this news release reflect the impact of Hurricane Katrina and ongoing labor market trends. Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast on August 29, 2005, with catastrophic effects in parts of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. This event occurred after the August QCEW reference period and before the September period. Its effects are first reflected in the September QCEW employment counts and the wage totals for the third quarter of 2005. QCEW nonresponse adjustment methods were modified for September 2005 to better reflect the impact of the hurricane in parts of Louisiana and Mississippi. For more information, see the QCEW section of the Katrina coverage on the BLS Web site (<http://www.bls.gov/katrina/qcewquestions.htm>).

Hurricane Rita made landfall September 24, after the September reference period. The impact of this event did not warrant changes to QCEW methodology for the third quarter of 2005.

TECHNICAL NOTE

QCEW data are the sums of individual establishment records reflecting the number of establishments that exist in a county or industry at a point in time. For this reason, county and industry data are not designed to be used as a time series.

The preliminary QCEW data presented in this release may differ from data released by the individual states as well as from the data presented on the BLS Web site. The potential differences result from several causes. Differences between BLS and State published data may be due to the continuing receipt, review and editing of UI data over time. On the other hand, differences between data in this release and the data found on the BLS Web site are the result of adjustments made to improve over-the-year comparisons. Specifically, these adjustments account for administrative (noneconomic) changes such as a correction to a previously reported location or industry classification. Adjusting for these administrative changes allows users to more accurately assess changes of an economic nature (such as a firm moving from one county to another or changing its primary economic activity) over a 12-month period. Currently, adjusted data are available only from BLS press releases.

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Labor – New York

Table 1. Covered¹ employment and wages in the United States, New York State, and large counties, third quarter 2005²

	Employment		Average weekly wage ³			
	September 2005 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2004-05 ⁴	Level 2005	National rank by level ⁵	Percent change 2004-05 ⁴	National rank by percent change ⁵
United States ⁶	132,929.3	2.0	\$777	—	6.1	—
New York State.....	8,394.8	0.9	941	4	5.7	26
<u>Twelve large counties outside New York City</u>						
Albany.....	229.3	0.2	804	91	1.9	305
Broome.....	94.8	0.4	623	291	3.7	275
Dutchess.....	117.5	-0.1	783	109	5.5	174
Erie.....	457.2	-0.4	690	210	3.9	266
Monroe.....	382.7	0.8	766	122	2.0	302
Nassau.....	597.8	0.4	862	61	(7)	(7)
Oneida.....	108.9	0.2	613	298	4.1	260
Onondaga.....	251.7	1.0	718	179	3.9	266
Orange.....	129.6	0.9	670	244	5.5	174
Rockland.....	112.4	1.6	806	90	4.8	223
Suffolk.....	609.8	0.3	836	76	5.0	213
Westchester.....	411.9	0.3	1,005	20	4.1	260
<u>Five large counties inside New York City</u>						
Bronx.....	221.2	1.9	772	118	2.8	294
Kings.....	457.5	2.2	686	218	3.2	289
New York.....	2,243.4	1.7	1,419	1	7.0	79
Queens.....	484.6	1.3	794	100	5.7	159
Richmond.....	89.7	0.8	709	189	2.5	298

¹ Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

² Data are preliminary.

³ Average weekly wages were calculated by using rounded data.

⁴ Percent changes were computed from quarterly employment and pay data adjusted for noneconomic county reclassifications.

⁵ Ranking does not include the county of San Juan, Puerto Rico.

⁶ Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

⁷ Data do not meet BLS or State agency disclosure standards.

Table 2. Covered¹ employment and wages by state, third quarter 2005²

Area	Employment	Average weekly wage ³			
	September 2005 (thousands)	Average weekly wage	National rank by level ⁴	Percent change, 2004-05	National rank by percent change ⁴
United States ⁵	132,929.3	\$777	-	6.1	-
Alabama.....	1,905.9	669	32	6.4	17
Alaska.....	320.2	797	13	5.6	30
Arizona.....	2,511.8	748	20	8.2	1
Arkansas.....	1,165.7	599	46	4.9	43
California.....	15,443.3	887	6	7.0	8
Colorado.....	2,212.1	808	11	7.3	7
Connecticut.....	1,665.2	966	2	5.3	38
Delaware.....	420.1	823	9	7.0	8
District of Columbia.....	666.4	1,265	1	4.5	48
Florida.....	7,801.6	708	26	8.1	2
Georgia.....	3,960.8	748	20	5.2	40
Hawaii.....	606.0	714	24	5.8	23
Idaho.....	635.5	605	45	6.0	19
Illinois.....	5,820.7	825	8	5.9	21
Indiana.....	2,916.3	689	29	5.2	40
Iowa.....	1,461.1	641	37	6.1	18
Kansas.....	1,315.3	659	34	6.5	15
Kentucky.....	1,779.5	651	35	5.2	40
Louisiana.....	1,770.8	637	39	6.9	10
Maine.....	606.0	631	42	4.6	46
Maryland.....	2,526.5	854	7	7.6	5
Massachusetts.....	3,193.3	947	3	4.5	48
Michigan.....	4,353.1	787	15	4.1	50
Minnesota.....	2,671.9	790	14	4.9	43
Mississippi.....	1,098.4	573	49	5.9	21
Missouri.....	2,696.2	691	27	5.5	33
Montana.....	424.2	563	51	7.4	6
Nebraska.....	896.7	633	41	5.3	38
Nevada.....	1,242.5	750	19	6.7	12
New Hampshire.....	630.7	772	16	5.8	23
New Jersey.....	3,960.8	928	5	5.8	23
New Mexico.....	791.0	629	43	6.8	11
New York.....	8,394.8	941	4	5.7	26
North Carolina.....	3,903.7	690	28	5.7	26
North Dakota.....	335.4	581	48	6.0	19
Ohio.....	5,360.6	723	23	5.5	33
Oklahoma.....	1,482.5	612	44	5.7	26
Oregon.....	1,683.4	714	24	5.6	30
Pennsylvania.....	5,597.6	764	18	5.7	26
Rhode Island.....	488.9	736	22	4.1	50
South Carolina.....	1,831.2	637	39	5.6	30
South Dakota.....	381.6	567	50	5.4	35
Tennessee.....	2,724.0	689	29	4.6	46
Texas.....	9,659.3	767	17	6.7	12
Utah.....	1,135.1	647	36	6.6	14

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered¹ employment and wages by state, third quarter 2005² -- continued

Area	Employment	Average weekly wage ³			
	September 2005 (thousands)	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level ⁴	Percent change, 2004-05	National ranking by percent change ⁴
Vermont.....	303.4	\$663	33	4.7	45
Virginia.....	3,617.7	815	10	7.7	4
Washington.....	2,820.6	801	12	6.5	15
West Virginia.....	702.9	589	47	5.4	35
Wisconsin.....	2,783.4	688	31	5.4	35
Wyoming.....	263.4	638	38	8.0	3
Puerto Rico.....	1,037.4	435	(6)	3.8	(6)
Virgin Islands.....	44.0	616	(6)	2.8	(6)

¹ Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

² Data are preliminary.

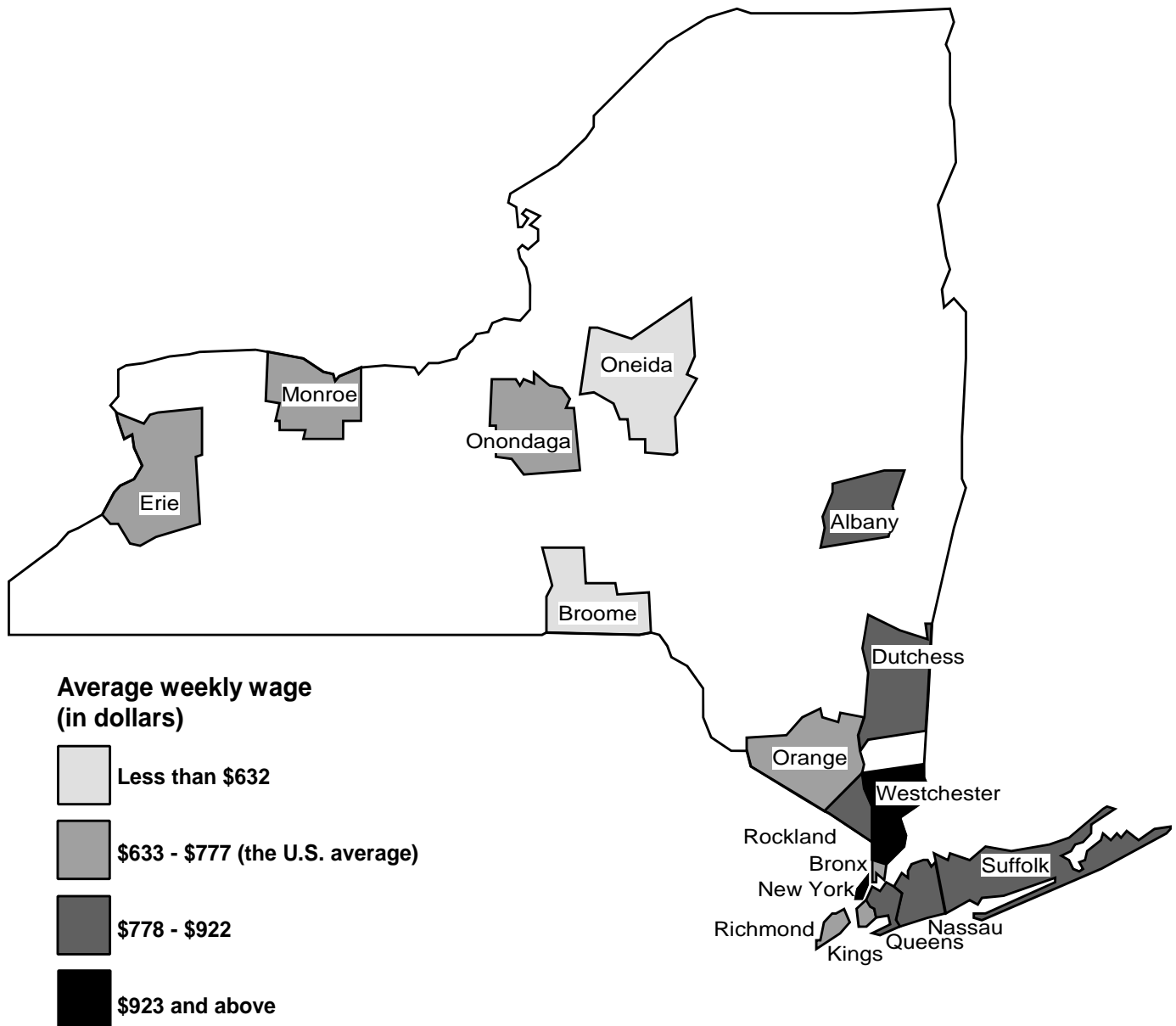
³ Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

⁴ Ranking does not include Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

⁵ Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

⁶ Data not included in the national ranking.

Chart 1. Average weekly wages, large counties in New York State, third quarter 2005



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, June 2006